



NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF INITIAL STUDY

TO: State Clearinghouse,
Responsible and Trustee Agencies,
Property Owners and Interested Parties

FROM: Sonoma County Water Agency
2150 W. College Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

MATANZAS CREEK DETENTION RESERVOIR SEDIMENT REMOVAL PROJECT SCH# 2001062092

The Sonoma County Water Agency (Agency) is preparing an Initial Study for the Matanzas Creek Detention Reservoir Sediment Removal Project. An Initial Study is a preliminary analysis of a project's potential environmental impacts used to determine whether a Negative Declaration or an Environmental Impact Report will be prepared. It is a public document that analyzes the potential environmental effects related to construction, operation, and maintenance of a project and describes ways to reduce or avoid possible environmental damage. The Initial Study for the Matanzas Creek Detention Reservoir Sediment Removal Project will be prepared in accordance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the Agency's Procedures for the Implementation of CEQA.

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) for this project was previously circulated on June 19, 2001. The public comment period closed on July 20, 2001. Changes to the proposed project description that have developed since warrant recirculating the NOP for comment.

As the lead agency for the proposed project, the Agency is interested in any comments that public agencies may have as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to that agency's statutory responsibilities in relation to the proposed project. We are also interested in any comments from the public related to the scope and content of the environmental information that should be included in the Initial Study.

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND NEED

Matanzas Creek Detention Reservoir (Matanzas Reservoir) was constructed in 1963 as part of the Central Sonoma Watershed Project, a cooperative project with the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (now the Natural Resources Conservation Service) under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (Public Law 566). Matanzas Reservoir is a floodwater detention structure with a design storage capacity of 1,500 acre-feet (ac-ft).¹ Under the terms of the cooperative

¹ The design storage capacity of 1,500 ac-ft includes a 200 ac-ft sediment pool and 1,300 ac-ft flood detention pool.

agreement, the Agency is responsible for maintaining the structural integrity and hydraulic capacity of Matanzas Reservoir.

A sediment removal project in 1988 dredged approximately 100,000 cubic yards of material from the reservoir bottom. Since 1988, sediment has continued to reduce floodwater storage capacity and threatens to adversely impact the reservoir spillway. The purpose of the project is to restore floodwater storage capacity within the existing reservoir.

PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The project is located on Agency-owned property in an unincorporated area of Sonoma County, approximately 2 miles southeast of the City of Santa Rosa (Figure 1). The reservoir is located on Matanzas Creek, southwest of Bennett Valley Road and north of Grange Road. Matanzas Reservoir is approximately 2,000 feet in length, extending from north to south.

The proposed project consists of the following activities to restore floodwater capacity within Matanzas Reservoir: removal of up to approximately 120,000 cubic yards of sediment from the reservoir; annual removal of gravels from the reservoir and placement into Matanzas Creek downstream of the dam to replenish spawning gravels; and construction of permanent access roads into the reservoir and downstream of the dam to facilitate these activities. Sediment removal would require dewatering Matanzas Reservoir, removal of fish and other wildlife from the reservoir, and excavation of sediment from the reservoir. The proposed project is anticipated to remove up to approximately 120,000 cubic yards of material from the reservoir, which would be disposed of in accordance with local, state, and federal regulations. Sediment removed from the reservoir would be placed on Agency property northeasterly of the dam against the existing hillside. Dewatering the reservoir may require diverting flow from Matanzas Creek around the project site using either gravity or pressure pipelines. During the dewatering process, fish and other wildlife within the reservoir would be removed, if and when necessary, and transported to sites designated by the California Department of Fish and Game.

The Initial Study would also evaluate changing the operation of Matanzas Reservoir. The dam was originally designed to operate as a floodwater detention structure with the dam's bottom valve kept open.² The dam has been operated with the bottom valve closed, resulting in the structure operating with residual storage each year. Changing the operation of Matanzas Reservoir to allow for the bottom valve to be open may result in several benefits to floodwater detention capacity. Sediment would move through the structure to the sediment pool instead of dropping out in the flood pool. Operating with the bottom valve open would also allow some sediment to pass downstream, thereby reducing downstream channel incision and the frequency of sediment removal from the reservoir. Floodwater detention capacity would also be improved because the structure would drain between storm events instead of storing water behind the dam.

FUNDING

The estimated project cost is \$2,230,000. The source of funding will be Zone 1A Flood Control funds.

² Letter to Bill Stillman, Sonoma County Water Agency, from Wildon J. Fontenot, Assistant State Conservationist, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, dated April 27, 1987.

JURISDICTIONAL/PERMITTING AGENCIES

The following are public entities and agencies that may require review of the project or that may have jurisdiction over the project area:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- California Department of Fish and Game
- Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region
- Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AREAS

The Initial Study will analyze the environmental impacts associated with the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed project for decision-makers, responsible and trustee agencies under CEQA, and the public. Specific areas of analysis in the Initial Study will include: biological resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, noise, and hazards. Other areas of analysis may be added based on input from the public and public agencies during the Notice of Preparation review period.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR THIS NOTICE OF PREPARATION

The public comment period for this Notice of Preparation will close at 5:00 p.m. on August 2, 2004, which is 33 days after the date of publication. Trustee and responsible agencies are asked to include the name, phone number, and address of a contact person with their comments.

Please send your comments to: Jessica Martini-Lamb
Senior Environmental Specialist
Sonoma County Water Agency
P.O. Box 11628
Santa Rosa, CA 95406

Comments may also be submitted electronically by visiting the Agency's website:
www.sonomacountywater.org.

Documents or files related to this project are available for review at the Agency's office located at 2150 West College Avenue, Santa Rosa, California, 95401.

If you have any questions regarding this Notice of Preparation, or if you would like to request that your name be removed from the mailing list, please contact Jessica Martini-Lamb, Senior Environmental Specialist, at (707) 547-1903.

PUBLICATION DATE: JULY 1, 2004

